

**Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children
Regular Meeting on November 12th, 2019
MEETING MINUTES – DRAFT FOR APPROVAL**

1 Call to order

A meeting of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children was held on November 12, 2019 at Hartford City Hall, Room 100. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

2 Roll Call

2.1 Attendees

Luke Bronin, Mayor and Co-Chair; Leslie Torres-Rodriguez, Superintendent and Co-Chair; Liany Arroyo, Director of Health & Human Services; Paul Dworkin, Executive Vice President, Office of Community Child Health, CCMC; Kimberly Oliver, Director of Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation and Staff; Richard Sussman, Director of Early Childhood Investments/HFPG; Jane Crowell, Assistant Director of Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation and Staff; Marie Jarry, Director of Public Services, Hartford Public Library

2.2 Members Not in Attendance

Leslie Carrillo, McKinney-Vento Liaison; Minal Kulkarni, Parent: Paula Gilberto, United Way of Central & Northeastern CT; Barbara Jo Warner, Director, Capitol Child Development Center

3 Approval of Minutes

In spite of the quorum, the actions of approving the minutes and support of Bill SB-930 were postponed until next meeting

4 Administrative Updates

4.1 Staff Report

4.1.1 New initiatives

FirstSchool collects data on experiences that children have in the classrooms. Hartford is halfway through in terms of collecting data on School Readiness Pre-school classrooms. *FirstSchool* looks at different data sets in terms of what children are exposed to in the classrooms such as activity settings which elaborates where the students spend most of their time in the classroom (data handout was shared and discussed). Choice time is important in order to promote independence and confidence in young children which truly represents children, developing a work plan and deciding what they want to work on within classroom environment with teacher's support. As per the data, 53.6% of the total time was dedicated for choice time. It has been observed on national level that when children leave preschool and enters the Kindergarten, choice time disappears which impacts the confidence and success rate of the students. Providers are also focusing on small group literacy activities in classrooms as well as whole group instruction, also known as circle time is considered very important. However, teachers are trying to trim down on transition time (lunch break, bathroom time etc.) for more instructional time. Classroom observations are done during the peak instructional time and has been trimmed down to two (2) hour observations in the morning sessions. When observers go into the classrooms, they use a device and they check off as they observe for four (4) randomly assigned children per classroom. Teachers use these data sets and their own data to identify which area they should focus on and develop a work plan with the help of instructional coach. At the end of the year this data is compiled again to demonstrate progress. EDUSNAP, a classroom observation feedback report was shared and analyzed with the members. Jane mentioned, once the data collection is completed, the researcher will come from North Carolina to give in depth presentation.

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Grace Street Facility closure had impacted some of the families attending School Readiness Classrooms. DFCYR team looked into those impacted families and cross referenced that with our more up to date report of School Readiness to get more sense of those families were taken care of and they were enrolled in another site with CRT or with another provider. Majority of families were enrolled with CRT or different provider. Some of the families were not enrolled and we reached out to each of the families via phone and we sent out the parent packets to those who we couldn't get in touch with.

Harvard's Lectio Institute convened almost a year ago. However, we got little distracted with our Bloomberg Initiative which focusing on LENA Grow and LENA Home but *Lectio* is of high interest to our partners around the Village's work around 3rd grade reading scores and campaign for grade level reading and the Superintendent's around improving those scores. *Lectio* is a framework, not a curriculum but rather it gives us the framework in mapping out what resources we have in Hartford that are focused on Early Literacy and once that mapping is complete, it informs funders and other key stakeholders of the kind of resources we might want to ramp up or for those who want to position in a different way to make sure that we are getting the outcomes that we expect with regard to changing those literacy outcomes. *Lectio* is interested in coming back to build on what they have already started. Recently, United Way sent out a survey which identified the critical importance of coaching support for teaching practices that strengthens the literacy skills. Coaching support in the classrooms is a costly practice and the State money can only support the staff very thinly. It was also noticed that programs were becoming more dependent on coaches. HPS has seen the similar issue at schools. In coach's absence how does the instructional leader continue to develop the instructional capacity of the teacher is the challenge.

Working Group task force was to be convened several weeks ago but it has been rescheduled for 11.13.2019. Jane has sent out the power point presentation of the last workshop. Task Force is focusing on a Procurement process as well as the Rubric. In regard to the Procurement practices that we implemented last year, task force recognized that as soon as they vote at the Cabinet meeting, all the providers should be informed and not wait for the OEC approval in order to give them enough time. The task force will also focus on Rubric and the research that supports how the Rubric was developed and implemented. One of the changes we have seen in our programs is that the instructional leaders are now bringing the Rubric in the class and working with staff. It has been reported by the teachers and instructional leaders that change in practice in terms of having a Rubric as a guide that supports growth in teaching practices. Rubric is to help identify skill sets and the performance of the teacher. The Mayor mentioned that process for measuring performance is a major issue. What would be a game plan this year? Would one period be enough to judge a program? Paul Dworkin asked if there is any guidelines or requirements for overall classroom assessment? Jane clarified there is an instrument called "Class" that a lot of researchers use across the country but it is very costly to administer and takes a longer period of time and inter related reliability is also time consuming.

Task Force took over following three tasks:

- Working group will dig into whether or not to recommend there should be an independent review of the Rubric.
- Parent participation on the cabinet; Whether or not to increase the number of parent participation.
- More proactive and formalized process to release notifications for applicants.

School Readiness Classrooms enrollment by end of October 2019, there were only three (3) programs which are full at capacity. Others have significant vacancies even though programs are offering various

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incentives for parent to enroll and register their children such as three (3) month free enrollment or reduced fee, enrolling the sibling for free etc. The programs are trying intensive marketing to enroll so they can generate revenue. Lost revenue at the beginning of the year is very hard for the programs to sustain as they still have to pay the staff as that's where the most of the funds are directed. Therefore, the programs are being innovative to recruit families but there are still significant vacancies. We have far more opportunities for Hartford families but fewer people are signing up. Head start, infant and toddler spaces are full as its in highest demand and parents don't have to pay. So, most of the providers are waiting for children to turn at least 2.8 age mark to recruit them. If we give back spaces to the state, then we will be denying slots to those children who will be turning 2.8 during the year, access to the program and this is an ongoing struggle. HHS offered to help spreading awareness to the families of Hartford in terms of informing what programs and options are available in the City. HHS sees approximately 5-6 thousand parents, almost 4 times a year, who are enrolled in WICK program and some of them have multiple kids.

Few takeaways/follow up:

- Larger/broader network meeting
- Coordinate with family childcare providers is important
- Look at numbers of families that work different work shifts and our dependent on family child care providers.
- Look at the number of unused slots and how to convert those into money.

Bloomberg Philanthropies/What Works Cities grant presser and retreat took place on October 17th at the Hartford Public Library. The Mayor and Superintendent joined by Clarence Wardell from Results for America for Bloomberg Philanthropies' What Works Cities' initiative, Steve Hannon from LENA, and Tonja Rucker from the National League of Cities for a press event to announce the grant award of \$442,000. Superintendent shared that her interest was to know of cross collaborative approaches that they lifted it from other cities as best practices and perhaps we can get a peek at that.

Providence Talks: Kim Oliver informed members that she is traveling to Providence for convening of Providence Talks Replication City teams and researchers from EGAP-the Evidence in Government and Policy Network on November 14th & 15th.

Bill SB 930: Kim asked how the group is feeling about this particular bill and voice their opinion. This pilot program for an Early Childhood Business Incubator Model was brought forth in last session. Hartford wasn't included as part of the pilot. Senator Doug McCrory is a co-chair of the education committee and they are very interested to know what is our thinking here. Jane mentioned that this bill started from New Britain as they were experiencing a large number of potential providers who wanted to become licensed family childcare providers but were living in a public building in which the landlord was reluctant to give approval or make any renovations that licensing requires. So they identified a facility in New Britain in which these providers could relocate their business and then there would be professional development looped across all those different providers. They had a large influx of immigrant families coming into the city and they wanted to become productive on workforce and thought becoming the family childcare provider would be an option to them. This is how this bill was born and they reached out to New Haven, Stamford, and Bridgeport to see if they were also interested in. So this will allow them to become licensed in another facility outside of their own home. It would be operated by the entity who would be administrating the facility in partnership with the provider. Kim mentioned that since Hartford is not part of this conversation this could be one of the reasons that state did not get out the committee is because Senator Mccrory doesn't have any reason to prioritize this.

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Jane emphasized that Commissioner Beth Bye has been really clear that she believes that family childcare providers are the way to provide more flexibility to families. Jane pointed Commissioner Bye's notes on the handout that she wants limit one facility on each of the cities and time limited before it is reviewed again and that the operator of facility would pass basic health and safety licensing. Richard Sussman asked, "Would participation in this particular innovation help us begin to address our childcare needs in a new way that going to be more responsible towards the needs of our community?". Jane clarified that rationale initially behind this program is to expand workforce development and increasing capacity by extended work. It is giving parents and providers an option that they otherwise would not because they can't get licensed because of where they live. So by providing another facility, the professional development can be provided to multiple providers in one facility to increase their ability to meet licensing standards. The Superintendent mentioned that currently we are having a challenge to filling spots, why would we create another option that may not be filled. However, if this is a way to innovate around the availability of time and age, then we may have to pursue. The Mayor mentioned that we haven't talked as much about our difficulty around tracking and staffing. He asked, if you are licensed, it doesn't mean that you are licensed to teach in one of our centers, does it? Jane mentioned it is not, but it will help to develop talent for our ELC because currently 43% of our school readiness pre-school classrooms meet the minimum credential standard for classroom. The minimum requirement means that you have to either be certified by the State Department of Education, person with bachelor's degree in any field but 12 credits on early childhood, a person with bachelor's degree in early childhood or bachelor's degree person who went through alternative route to secure that bachelors or you can have a CDA with 12 credits. If the classroom doesn't meet that requirement, those programs has to come with action plan on how they going to recruit a person that meets that credential requirement and we in turn inform the OEC.

Richard Sussman asked Liany if this structure of 4-5 family childcare providers located in one space is a unique opportunity to try out some of new health related delivery? Kim mentioned, on-site childcare is a big deal for our job centers and it is envisioned as a one shop center across the country. Jane mentioned that the Locust Street facility is a huge facility but not easily accessible to families and not in the neighborhood. Liany mentioned that when you look at the Latino children, they are less likely to be in a center based care because of language and other issues and we are saying that being in a center is better quality than being in a family childcare facility which may or may not be the case.

4.2 Co-Chair Reports

Mayor Bronin referred to Jane and mentioned that as a team and as a Mayor and we as a City, we are really lucky to been beneficiary of many many years of outstanding leadership on her job and our team has really made it internationally in this effort and we are in inheritors of that. We are the national level leadership in this area.

Kim mentioned that Jane is nationally recognized and she provides a great leadership role with the wealth of knowledge she has. She travels across the country and coaches' other cities including cities like Denver etc. Jane has been thinking of retiring for a while now and she has decided to do so this year. Her last day of work is November 22nd. It is hard for the department as we lean into her expertise with Early Learning programs. Jane mentioned, professionally, it was a hardest decision for her to make since there is so much to be done, however, she said, "time is something you can't buy". She also mentioned how Hartford has been always a part of her family and working with the City was a privilege for her. She thanked all the team for their alliance.

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5 Business Agenda/Action Items

5.1. Task Force is focusing on a Procurement process as well as the Rubric.

As mentioned above, Task Force will focus on these tasks:

- Working group will dig into whether or not to recommend there should be an independent review of the Rubric.
- Parent participation on the cabinet; Whether or not to increase the number of parent participation.
- More proactive and formalized process to release notifications for applicants.

5.2. Develop a meeting schedule:

Since the retreat for this year was cancelled due to Providence Talk meeting, new date should be recognized.

2020: Quarterly meetings

6 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.